

**United States Department of the Interior**

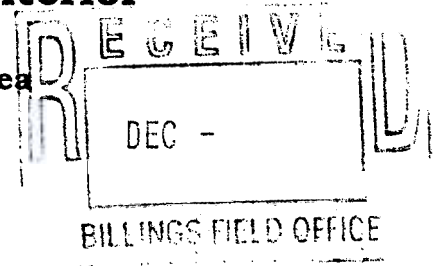
**National Park Service**

**Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area**

20 Highway 14A East

Lovell, WY 82431

307-548-2251



**In Reply Refer To**

November 30, 2004

Linda Coates-Markle  
Montana/Dakotas Wild Horse and Burro Specialist  
Billings Field Office, 5001 Southgate Drive  
Billings, Montana, 59107-6800

Dear Linda:

The NPS is prepared to assist the BLM in projects that will improve the overall range condition of the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range (PMWHR). Range projects alone, however, will not improve the range to a quality required to support both a minimum of 140 (+/-) free-roaming horses and have a "Thriving Natural Ecosystem Balance" as per the Wild Horse and Burro Act. Projects, additional lands, and new approaches may be necessary. Specifically, the NPS supports the following approaches:

An interagency agreement that would streamline formal assistance for range projects, including the transfer of materials, supplies, equipment, staff and project funds between the BLM and the NPS.

Range expansion on BLM lands contiguous with the western border of the horse range.

Enter into a joint program to improve range conditions, provide additional water sources and improve access for the horses to unused portions of the range.

Jointly pursue purchase or land exchanges for private land within BICA adjacent to the PMWHR. There is one large parcel now for sale.

A "no net loss of winter range" option. Temporarily allowing the use of up to 1400 acres of NPS land (East Trail Creek area) if the BLM improves a like amount of winter range.

Range expansion on NPS lands contiguous to the existing PMWHR.

The NPS understands the current range is of marginal condition. The NPS is interested in providing sustainable conditions for the horse herd while reversing the declining trend of range within NPS lands. All actions involving the NPS would be subject to NEPA/106 compliance. If you have any questions concerning these or other possibilities, please contact Rick Lasko, Chief of Resources, at 307-548-5410.

Sincerely,

Darrell J. Cook  
Superintendent